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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses strategies that can be used in an inclusive elementary classroom to give gifted children the opportunity to choose, plan, and develop individual projects that will add meaning and purpose to their education. The steps toward providing instruction for gifted students are described, including the beginning of the year assessment and evaluation, conferences with students and their parents to allow the students to set goals for themselves, and the development of the student educational plan. Effective strategies for adapting instruction and curriculum for the gifted children are outlined, including: (1) curriculum compacting; (2) involving students in Type 1 activities such as guest speakers, performances, videos, television programs, and field trips; (3) involving students in Type II Activities such as setting goals, predicting, determining cause and effect, following directions, making inferences, and analyzing data; (4) individual or small group student projects in a self-selected problem or area of study; and (5) enrichment clusters. The use of work portfolios, show portfolios, and teacher portfolios to assess student progress is discussed. Appendices include a form for personal interest inventories, an SEP planning worksheet, a form for determining student goals and objectives, and a form for developing a student educational plan. (CR)

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Meeting the Needs

of

Gifted Students

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Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students in the Inclusion Classroom

During the past year, Bloomington Hills Elementary has been striving to become a "Total Inclusion School." There are some very positive things that have been taking place, such as:

1) Teachers are provided with some planning and collaboration time.
2) All students are included in the regular classroom.
3) Volunteers, para-professionals and others are brought into the classroom to help those students with special needs.
4) Some inservice and training have been provided for teachers.
5) Many children's needs have been met.

Modifications are often made to help students who struggle. Overwhelmed teachers spend most of their time trying to meet the needs of those students who struggle with learning disabilities, language deficiencies, and physical handicaps.

Students with high abilities and exceptional skills are being overlooked and are often given extra paper/pencil assignments as busy work and to keep them from disrupting the rest of the class. There is no challenge and no value in these kinds of experiences. There is a lack of purpose in what these students are being asked to do.

> *"You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives."*
>
> -- *Ancient Chinese Proverb*

There are many strategies that can be used in an inclusive classroom that will provide all students with opportunities to progress and learn. These strategies can be especially helpful in giving the gifted child the opportunity to choose, plan and

develop individual projects that will add meaning and purpose to their education. There are many things the classroom teacher can do that will help meet the needs of the gifted child.

• Beginning of the Year Assessment and Evaluation:

Begin the year by getting to know students, their needs, interests and abilities. Personal Interest Inventories (See Appendix) could be used to discover students' interests and how they feel about themselves. The personal inventory might include questions to identify how the child feels about reading, writing, math, school in general and about himself. These inventories would help the classroom teacher to become aware of what strengths the child believes he/she has and areas that he/she would like to improve in.

Assessments and tests would be used to help identify skills and abilities that students are proficient in and also where they need help. Some forms of assessment that could be used are:

*Results from State End of Level tests given at the end of the previous year.
*Math Inventory Tests
*Pre-Spelling/Writing Assessment
*Basic Reading Inventory Assessment

These asessments could be used to develop a differentiated curriculum for gifted students.

• SEP Conferences

SEP's should be held with students and their parents near the beginning of the year to allow the students to set goals for themselves. A planning worksheet

would be sent home with the student. The student and his/her parents would decide on three to five goals that the student would like to work on for the coming year. The parents and the students would then come and conference with the teacher. In setting goals, the student, parent and teacher would identify steps that will help the student reach his/her goal. This gives the student some responsibility for his/her learning. As the student achieves the goals that were set at the beginning of the year, new goals would be set so that the student will continue to make individual growth and progress throughout the year.

• The Student Educational Plan

After all Beginning of the Year Assessments and the SEP Conferences have been completed, the teacher should develop an Student Educational Plan for each student. This plan would recognize and utilize all of the information gathered at the beginning of the year. The child's progress would be evaluated throughout the year. (See *Student Educational Plan in Appendix)

• Adapting Instruction and Curriculum

Joe Renzulli and Sally Reis share effective strategies for adapting instruction and curriculum for the gifted child in the regular classroom. Many teaching adaptations that are made for the gifted student, are good for all students.

> *"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you will help them become what they are capable of being."*
>
> -- Goethe

Some adaptations might include:

*Curriculum Compacting: Curriculum Compacting would be used to modify the curriculum for above-average ability students and for students who display strengths or high levels of interests in specific content areas.

*Involving students in Type I Activities: Students will be involved in many Type I Activities that will help them to make connections with the regular classroom curriculum. Some of these activities might include guest speakers, performances, videos, television programs and fieldtrips.

*Type II Activities: Activities will be provided for all students to help them develop skills in creative thinking, problem solving, critical thinking and doing research. Some of these skills might include setting goals, predicting, determining cause and effect, following directions, making inferences and analyzing data.

*Individual or Small Group Student Project --A Type III Enrichment Activity: Students will be given opportunities to apply their interests, knowledge, creative ideas and task commitment to a self-selected problem or area of study.

*Enrichment Clusters: A weekly experience would be provided for students to participate in activities that are based on their interests and learning styles rather than ability. All students would be involved in these activities. The clusters would be guided by enrichment learning and teaching instead of formalized instructions.

•Student/Teacher Conferences

Brief, personal conferences will be held every two weeks or month to assess each child's progress on personal goals. These conferences might include discussing how a child is doing on a writing project, a book that is being read or an individual student project. The teacher can assess the child's progress and identify additional skills that the child needs to learn in order to be successful.

•Portfolios

Portfolios are a valuable assessment tool. They can be used to show growth and development as a child progresses through the school year. Three portfolios will be used in the classroom.

*Work Portfolio -- this will be an ongoing collection of student work. It will contain completed work and work in progress.

*Show Portfolio -- This will contain work the child selects as being his/her best work or showing that a specific skill has been mastered.

*Teacher Portfolio -- This portfolio will be kept by the teacher. It will include the Students Educational Plan, copies of the Basic Reading Inventory, Running Records, copies of the Modified Management Plan for Individual or Small Group Projects and The Compactor. These records will identify how the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of each child.

"It is today that we must create the world of the future."

--Eleanor Roosevelt

Effective teaching methods and strategies can help all students. A great deal of time and resources have been expended to help those students who struggle in school. The time has come for us to focus on students with high abilities and exceptional skills. Their potential is an untapped resource. They can accomplish great things and will be an important part of our future if we will begin to meet their needs in the inclusion classroom.

List of Resources:

Beecher, Margaret. Developing the Gifts and Talents of All Students in the Regular Classroom: An Innovative Curricular Design Based on the Enrichment Triad Model. Creative Learning Press, Inc. Connecticut, 1995.

Goodman, Gretchen. Inclusive Classrooms From A to Z: A Handbook for Educators. Teachers' Publishing Group, Ohio, 1994.

Johnson, Nancy L. The FAces of the Gifted: A Resource for Educators and Parents. Pieces of Learning, 1989.

Reis, Sally M. Curriculum Compacting: The Complete Guide for Modifying the Regular Curriculum for High Ability Students. Creative Learning Press, Inc., Connecticut, 1992.

Renzulli, Joseph S. Schools For Talent Development: A Practical Plan for Total School Development. Creative Learning Press, Inc., Connecticut, 1994.

Winebrenner, Susan. Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented. Free Spirit, Minneapolis, MN, 1992.

Appendix

Personal Interest Inventories
SEP Planning Worksheet
Student's Goals and Objectives
Student Educational Plan

Personal Interest Inventory

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kinds of books do you like to read? _____

2. What parts of the newspaper do you read? _____

3. How do you know what is happening in the world around you? _____

4. What TV programs do you like to watch? _____

Why? _____

5. What do you like to do when you have free time at home? _____

6. What is your favorite subject in school? _____

Why? _____

7. What don't you like to do in school? _____

Why _____

8. What kinds of thing do you like to collect? _____

9. What would you like to be when you grow up? _____

Why? _____

10. If you could talk to any person from history, who would you like to talk to? _____

What three questions would you ask this person? _____

_____

_____

_____

11. Describe about a place that you have visited or that you would like to visit. _____

_____

_____

_____

12. Tell about your favorite vacation. _____

_____

_____

_____

13. What kind of music do you like to listen to? _____

_____

_____

14. Tell about your family. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. If you could learn about anything in school this year, what would you like to learn about? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student SEP Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

- There are many things that I like to do. Some of these things are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

- Some things I think I am good at in school are:

_____

_____

_____

- There are things I would like to do better on at school. They are:

_____

_____

_____

- My goals for this year in school are: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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STUDENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Student's Name: _____ **Teacher:** _____ **Grade:** ___ **Date:** _____

Special skills and abilities: _____

Student Goals	Objectives for Goals	Evaluation of Goals	Completed

_____ _____ _____

Student Signature **Parent Signature** **Teacher Signature**

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Student Education Plan

Name: _____

Personal Interests: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Child's Goals for the Year: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Test Scores:

State Core Math Test: _____

Math Inventory Test: _____

Math Areas child needs to work on: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Basic Reading Inventory Test: _____

_____ Date Given: _____

State Core Reading Test: _____

Language Areas Child needs to work on: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Pre-spelling Test (Writing): Number of words spelled correctly _____

Level of spelling words child needs to work on: _____

Strengths of this child: _____

Areas where this child needs help: _____

Educational plan for this child: _____

Evaluation of Child's Progress: End of second reporting period

Child's Accomplishments:

Areas where this child will continue to need help:

Date:

Evaluation of Child's Progress: End of third reporting period

Child's Accomplishments: _____

_____

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_____

Areas where this child will continue to need help: _____

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_____ Date: _____

Evaluation of Child's Progress: End of year

_____

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Child's Accomplishments: _____

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Areas where this child will continue to need help: _____

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_____

_____ Date: _____

****

On-going Evaluation

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis_____

_____

_____

_____

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis_____

_____

_____

_____

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis_____

_____

_____

_____

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis _____

_____

_____

_____

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis _____

_____

_____

_____

Reading Running Record: Date: _____

Title: _____

%: _____ Reading Diagnosis _____

_____

_____

_____

Basic Reading Inventory: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Date _____

Year-end Spelling/Writing Test: _____

Number of words spelled correctly: _____

Level of words: _____

_____

_____

.....

Math Tests

Weekly spelling tests:

Anecdotal Records